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MUSEUM LUDWIG

PRESS RELEASE

May 4 – August 11, 2019

Fiona Tan: GAAF

Part of the “Artist Meets Archive” series initiated by the Internationale Photoszene Köln

Opening: Friday, May 3, 2019, 7 p.m.

Press conference: Thursday, May 2, 2019, 11 a.m., press preview starting at 10 a.m.

Afterward there will be a bus tour for the press to all venues of the “Artist Meets Archive” exhibitions by the Photoszene Festival. Further information is available at festival.photoszene.de/en/press.html. Please register for the tour at presse@photoszene.de.

International artists discover archives in Cologne: this is the idea behind the Internationale Photoszene Köln 2019 festival program “Artist Meets Archive.” As cooperating partners, six institutions each invited an artist to develop a project based on their collection. Apart from the Museum Ludwig, the institutions are: the Museum of the City of Cologne, the Museum of Applied Arts Cologne, the Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum, the Rheinische Bildarchiv, and the Photographische Sammlung/SK Stiftung Kultur.

The Museum Ludwig invited the artist and filmmaker Fiona Tan (b. 1966 in Pekanbaru, Indonesia; lives in Amsterdam) to realize an exhibition project with the museum’s photography collection as the starting point. Fiona Tan’s work revolves around questions of time, identity, and memory. The archive as a time capsule has played a role in her artistic strategies of research and classification in previous projects.

Fiona Tan: GAAF takes as its starting point the Agfacolor advertisement archive—several thousand 6 × 6 color negatives and photographs which were taken between 1952 and 1968. This archive provided Agfa with material for advertisements, brochures, exhibitions, and the magazine *Agfa Photoblätter*. After discovering this almost forgotten and uncatalogued archive at the Museum Ludwig, Tan became interested in the inherent paradox of its images: staged and idealized scenes of models posing for professional photographers, nonetheless intended to appear spontaneous and authentic, as if taken by amateurs. “These images cause me to reflect upon the pose, upon artificiality versus spontaneity and authenticity,” says Tan who is making these images visible to the public for the first time.

The Dutch word *gaaf*—an anagram, or reordering, of the letters in Agfa—means “neat” or “perfect.” In this exhibition Fiona Tan focuses on the image and the role of women as portrayed in

these photographs, drawing attention to the ideal as opposed to the reality of these formative decades in postwar Germany. Juxtaposing fantasy with reality, professional with vernacular, color with black and white, Tan confronts this advertising archive with documentary photographs from the same era from the Museum Ludwig collection and with a selection of her own works dealing with portraiture. *Vox Populi London* (2012) embodies an informal snapshot, a playful group portrait of a city. In *Linnaeus' Flower Clock* (1998), Tan reflects on the nature of time itself. Intentionally blurring the divisions between film and photography, the six-part installation *Provenance* (2008) questions if it is possible to look at a film in the same way as a painted portrait.

Director Yilmaz Dziewior: "I'm delighted that Fiona Tan is opening up a completely new perspective on the photography collection at the Museum Ludwig with her artistic point of view. After all, the permanent collection is of central importance to our institution, and the way in which artists approach these works is particularly instructive."

An essay written by the artist will be included in an artist's book accompanying the exhibition, and there will be a program of films curated by Fiona Tan as well as lectures.

Fiona Tan: GAAP, in German and English, with a foreword by Yilmaz Dziewior and an essay by Fiona Tan, Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, Cologne, 80 pages, 145 color illustrations, €16.80 (retail price), €14 (museum price)

The exhibition is generously supported by the Mondriaan Fund, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and Russmedia.

Exhibition Curator: Fiona Tan

Curator, Photography Collection: Miriam Szwast

Accompanying program

May 14, 2019, 7 p.m.

Kingdom of Shadows, film by Fiona Tan (2000)

Part of the KunstBewusst series (in cooperation with the Filmforum)

June 4, 2019, 7 p.m.

Fiona Tan: Archives, People, Gestures

Lecture by Dr. Sophie Berrebi as part of the KunstBewusst series

June 19, 2019, 7 p.m.

The Sensitive Plate, film by Kees Hin (1976)

June 25, 2019, 7 p.m.

Mit Geistern leben: Fiona Tan und die Vitalität des Archivs

Lecture by Professor Beatrice von Bismarck as part of the KunstBewusst series

July 17, 2019, 7 p.m.

The Marriage of Maria Braun, film by Rainer Werner Fassbinder (1979)

August 7, 2019, 7 p.m.

Finding Vivian Maier, film by John Maloof and Charlie Siskel (2013)

All films and lectures take place in the Museum Ludwig auditorium.

Website and Social Media

The Museum Ludwig will be posting about the exhibition on its social media channels with the hashtags #MLxFionaTan #photoszenefestival #photoszene2019 #artistmeetsarchive

Facebook/Instagram/Twitter/Vimeo: @MuseumLudwig – www.museum-ludwig.de